Five Area University Leaders

Students Reject Agnew Aide Overture

By Herbert H. Denton
Washington Post Staff Writer

An invitation to meet today with an aide to Vice President Spiro T. Agnew has been sharply refused by student government leaders from at least five Washington-area universities.

While turning down the invitation to meet at 2 p.m. today with C. D. Ward, the Vice President's assistant for domestic affairs, three of those contacted said they would be willing to meet directly with Agnew.

Robert Whitmore, student body president at American University, conceded that the three had used the refusals to "slap back at the Vice President," but he called this an "honest reaction on the part of students."

He signed a letter of refusal along with James Clark and Neil Portnow, student government presidents at Georgetown and George Washington universities, respectively. All three had banded together last week in urging universities to open their facilities to peace demonstrators.

Both Whitmore and Clark said that earlier they had given "tentative commitments" to attend the meeting but then changed their minds.

Cornelius Williams and Michael Gold, student government heads at Federal City College and the University of Maryland, also said they would not attend.

Williams said he had not bothered to send a letter of regret. "I don't know how sincere they are and I don't want to waste my time talking to them anyway," Williams said.

Ward said he had not called the meeting to discuss the Moratorium but to talk about student involvement in "government policies and programs." He said the Vice President had not been aware that the meeting was scheduled.

Of those contacted, only Kenneth Filarski, student head at Catholic University, indicated he might attend. But, he told a reporter, he planned to confer with the other student leaders before making a final decision.

Michael Collins, student head at Howard, was not available for comment.

Ward described the meeting variously as an "opportunity for them to get their views across" and a "learning process for my edification."

Students said they doubted that anything fruitful could come from talking to the Vice President and even less by speaking with his aide.